

> VOLUNTEERING AND THE AUSTRALIA CURRICULUM – WHERE IT FITS

The Australian Curriculum is being introduced across Australia in Foundation – Year 10 for the study of:

- + English
- + Mathematics
- + Science
- + Geography
- + History
- + The Arts.

Work Studies Version 7.2 has recently been released and a number of other curriculum areas are awaiting final release.

Each State and Territory authority determines the implementation timeframe for each curriculum area.

In addition, the Australian Curriculum identifies:

...a set of general capabilities that will flow through curriculum areas. General capabilities are a key dimension of the Australian Curriculum. They encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. They play a significant role in realising the goals set out in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA) 2008 that all young people in Australia should be supported to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

The Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities. These are:

- + *Literacy*
- + *Numeracy*
- + *Information and communication technology capability*
- + *Critical and creative thinking*
- + *Personal and social capability*
- + *Ethical understanding*
- + *Intercultural understanding.*

Volunteering experiences satisfy many aspects of the ‘personal and social’ capability.

The two key areas where volunteering fits in the Foundation – Year 10 curriculum are social management and social awareness.

Social management

This element involves students interacting effectively and respectfully with a range of adults and peers. Students learn to negotiate and communicate effectively with others, work in teams, positively contribute to groups and collaboratively make decisions, resolve conflict and reach positive outcomes. Students also develop the ability to initiate and manage successful personal relationships, and participate in a range of social and communal activities. Social management involves building skills associated with leadership, such as mentoring and role modelling. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- + communicate effectively
- + work collaboratively
- + make decisions
- + negotiate and resolve conflict
- + develop leadership skills.

Social awareness

This element involves students recognising the feelings of other people, and knowing how and when to assist. Students learn to show respect for – and understand – the perspectives, emotional states and needs of others. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- + appreciate diverse perspectives
- + contribute to civil society
- + understand relationships.